

# THE POWER OF WORLDLY WISDOM

*Al Brown*

It has always been distressing to Christians when worldly people scoff and belittle their religion, but it is not unusual. It is never easy for even the strongest to endure such ridicule, and those whose faith is weak often fail to stand up under such abuse. Derision is just one manifestation of the hostility that exists between the kingdom of God and the realm Satan rules—the world (John 15:18-20; Jam. 4:4). Those who are guided by the wisdom of the world have always thought God's wisdom, as revealed in His word, is folly (1 Cor. 1:18).

One of the Christian's primary tasks is to turn away from the way the world thinks about almost everything and replace it with God's wisdom. Paul wrote: **“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”** (Rom. 12:2).

This is no small undertaking. People are surrounded by worldly wisdom from the time they are born. It is instilled in them throughout their school years. Parents often re-enforce these concepts by living examples of worldliness before their children. Relatives and friends contribute their share of harmful influence. Movies and television programs, from kiddie shows to adult fare, aggressively teach the wisdom of the world as being socially, ethically, and morally acceptable. At the same time, they pour contempt and scorn on God and all that is holy.

Many people attempt to embrace Christianity, but, more often than not, they insist on doing it on their own terms. They may outwardly obey the commands considered necessary in order to be members of the church. However, the worldly attitudes and actions so obvious in their lives make it clear that they have not obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine (the gospel) which was delivered to them (Rom. 6:17). The old man, with worldly wisdom, is not killed out of their lives, nor have they been renewed in the spirit of their minds by putting on the new man (Eph. 4:23f).

Since the old man, with all his worldly wisdom, actions, and motives, is still very much alive, it is unrealistic to expect such people to think or act as Christ did. This would be totally contradictory to their nature. The words of the wise man are still true: **“As he thinketh within himself so is he”** (Pro. 23:7), so their most prominent characteristics will continue to be selfishness and her offspring—the lusts of the flesh and of the eye and the boastful pride of life (1 John 2:16).

It is wishful thinking to expect such brethren to ever give more than a token commitment of their time, talents, or financial resources to the service of God. They just cannot do it unless they first give themselves to the Lord (Cf. 2 Cor. 8:1-5), and they have refused to do this.

There is another side of the coin. Because these people still embrace the wisdom of this world, they also find it impossible to accept God's wisdom in reference to the calamities and trials which confront all men. They cannot accept

what God says about why these things come into their lives, the use they are to make of them, or the way they are to conduct themselves while under trial.

This explains why God's wisdom is said to desert them in times of crisis and calamity (Pro. 1:24-31). The promises of God, which are given to fortify, strengthen, and encourage those who are being tried, are just so much "pie-in-the-sky" to them. They cannot hope and trust in God's counsel and promises since these are based on faith—a quality in which they are destitute.

The only thing in which they can trust is their own feeble wisdom and resources. No wonder such people are often driven to despair. Men, by their own wisdom (worldly wisdom) have never been able to direct their own steps in such a way that a full, rich, meaningful life is the result (Jer. 10:23).

The reason worldly wisdom is a grossly distorted, twisted, and perverted view of truth is obvious when one realizes that its author is Satan (Jam. 3:15), the archdeceiver and father of lies (John 8:44). If people ever find the rich, rewarding life God intended them to have, it is imperative that they reject Satan's lies and refuse to be conformed to the world's wisdom.

They must be transformed, by renewing their minds, in order to prove, to themselves and to others, that God's wisdom is good and practical and perfect (Rom. 12:2). Thus, they will replace the faulty wisdom they have followed with the perfect wisdom which is from above (Jam. 3:17f). When this is done, they will find that they are no longer in step with the world (Cf. 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1). They no longer walk with the world in the "**same excess of riot**" (1 Pet. 4:4), so the world's hostility is aroused against them (John 15:19).

If you are on good terms with the world but entertain any desire at all of living eternally with your God, you would do well to get control of yourself. Renounce the world—its wisdom and its ways, and redirect your thinking, beliefs, and your life (Jam. 4:4-10). Even though such redirection will certainly bring on the hostility of the world, this is the way to life which is life indeed.~

*Deceased*